

HOUSE....No. 29.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Jan. 24, 1840.

Ordered, That the Committee on Printing take into consideration the subject of the public printing, and report what alteration, if any, is necessary in the present method of procuring the execution of the printing for the several departments of the government, so as to reduce the expense of that branch of the public expenditure.

L. S. CUSHING, *Clerk*.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Feb. 8, 1840.

The Committee on Printing, who had referred to them on the 24th of January, an order "to take into consideration the subject of the public printing, and report what alteration, if any, is necessary in the present method of procuring the execution of the printing for the several departments of the government, so as to reduce the expense of that branch of the public expenditure," have attended to that duty, and offer the following

REPORT:

The committee find that the bills for printing done for the Commonwealth, during the year 1839, were as follows :

Printing for the Senate,	\$3,157 90
“ “ Secretary’s Office,	2,410 11
“ “ House of Representatives,	2,115 34
“ “ Board of Education,	1,422 47
“ “ Agricultural Commissioner,	680 05
“ “ Land Office,	208 61
“ “ Adjutant General’s Office,	203 88
“ “ Treasury Office,	147 80
“ “ Sergeant at Arms,	13 29
	\$10,359 45

Of this amount, \$4,401 19 was paid for paper, and \$1,140 08, for binding, stitching, folding, engraving, &c., making together \$5,541 27, and leaving as the compensation of the printers, \$4,818 18.

The price at which the printing for the State is now done, (35 cents per thousand for composition, and 97 cents per token of 250 sheets, for press work and dry pressing,) is not in the opinion of the committee too high. It is believed to be no more than a fair remuneration for the labor, which from the haste with which the work is often required, rendering necessary considerable night labor, is done to much less advantage, than many other kinds of work. The work has invariably been performed well, and in a much neater manner, than the public documents of any other State in the Union, or of Congress ; and if the contractors have made it profitable, it must have been by their own industry and econo-

my, and not in consequence of having been overpaid by the State.

As the condition of the finances of the Commonwealth, is such, however, as to call for retrenchment, in every quarter where it is practicable, without resort to improper parsimony, the committee would suggest that some saving may be made in this branch of the public expenditure without detriment to the public interest. The paper on which the Legislative documents are now printed, costs \$4 a ream. It is believed, that the difference between this paper and that costing \$3,50 a ream would be scarcely perceptible, while by the use of the latter, a saving of \$550 would have been realized the last year. By using for the longer documents of the Legislature, a type one size smaller, the difference in which would be unnoticed by many, a considerable saving may also be effected. Although in the printing of so large a number of separate documents, as are ordered by the two Houses, every one who is acquainted with printing, will perceive it is impossible to prevent the recurrence of many blank pages, yet with care, these may, to some extent, be avoided. By the adoption of these measures, which the committee have suggested to the State printers, and which they will act upon, unless the Legislature see cause to object, a saving of upwards of ten per cent or more than \$1,000, on an amount of printing equal to that of last year, will be saved to the Treasury.

There remains yet one more suggestion to be made in this connexion. It is in regard to the number of copies of documents which are ordered. Many of the documents printed for the information of the Legislature, are not of a character so generally interesting, as to call for the number of 1500, which has usually been printed. Many sets of the Legislative documents, however, being

called for every year, from other States and from foreign countries, it would not be advisable to print less than 1000 copies of any of the documents, and care should be taken by the reporting committees, that the number of the more important documents be not restricted to this, in order that no reprints may become necessary.

In looking over the printing expenditures of the State, the committee were induced to inquire into the amount paid for newspapers furnished to members of the Legislature. The amount paid last year for this purpose, was \$7,545 48. At the present session the number having been reduced to *two* a day, and confined to papers published in the State, the amount will probably be reduced to \$5,000. Should the expenditures of the State continue to exceed its receipts, it will be worthy the attention of future Legislatures, whether this item may not be further reduced without detriment to the public interest.

The amount paid for printing the laws of the Commonwealth in the newspapers, is the only remaining item in this branch of the public expenditure, to be considered. The amount allowed for printing the laws of 1837, was \$633 40, and for the laws of 1838, \$516 67. The method of publishing the laws in the newspapers, is one of the best which can be adopted to give them publicity, and the sum of \$16 66, allowed to each newspaper which publishes the laws is so small, that the committee are of opinion it should be increased, whenever the state of the Treasury will warrant any enlargement of expenditure.

For the Committee.

J. B. MORSS.

